

"HOW TO AVOID THESE 10 COSTLY MISTAKES WHEN HIRING A HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTOR"



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Become An Empowered Consumer!

"HOW TO AVOID THESE 10 COSTLY MISTAKES WHEN HIRING A HEATING & COOLING CONTRACTOR!"

By Bob Bies

www.Furnace-Repair-Edmonton.ca

587-409-5683

Here it is at last. The Guide you've been waiting for.

Read This Guide and You Will Discover:

- How to put more money in your wallet with lower utility bills, fewer repair bills, and longer lasting equipment.
- How to achieve 24-hour comfort, winter and summer, in every room of your house so that you can fully enjoy your time with your family.
- How to get contractors to go the extra mile so that you and your family are safe and comfortable 24-hours a day
- How to get your new heating & cooling equipment installed on budget and on time
- How to determine if your furnace or air conditioner is the right size for your home so that you are not paying extra for energy costs
- How to avoid lung cancer and other chronic lung diseases caused by poor indoor air quality
- Performance guarantees your contractor should offer to protect your investment and peace-of-mind
- The right questions to ask and the industry "lingo" before hiring a contractor so that you don't get ripped off

Dear Homeowner,

Thank you for taking the time to read this Guide on hiring a heating & cooling contractor.

Education is the first step to making sound decisions. Similar to buying a house or car, the more informed you are before hiring a contractor means less headaches and more savings.

We at www.Furnace-Repair-Edmonton.ca represent Pro Solutions Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning Inc. They've been in the plumbing, heating and air conditioning business for over 12 years and have been serving the Edmonton area since 2001.

In that time, Pro Solutions has learned that **Heating & Air Conditioning** is a subject of much confusion. As a result, they want to expose common misconceptions, myths and out-and-out lies.

We prepared this Consumer's Guide as an educational service to assist you in making an informed, intelligent decision about selecting the "right" company for servicing your plumbing, heating and air conditioning.

We have dedicated our company to consumer awareness and education and helping homeowners get the highest return from their furnace & air conditioning investment. We welcome your inquiries and will gladly answer any questions.



Warmest Regards,



Bob Bies

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"How to Avoid These 10 Costly Mistakes When Hiring a Heating & Cooling Contractor!"

Mistake #1 Hiring a Contractor Based On The Lowest Price!

The old adage is really true. "You get what you pay for." This is especially true in the contracting business. If you want good contracting you should decide to deal with a contractor because of the overall value you receive, NOT because they are the lowest priced.

Here's why...

Value = Quality + Service + Price

It is **impossible** for any company in any industry to offer the cheapest price, while offering the highest quality products and best service. You can get high quality and super service, but you can't get both and still get the lowest price.

Just like in your business, you hire the best people and buy the highest quality products but you must charge more for your services. Total Value is all three **Quality, Service and Price!**

The 3 most common problems YOU WILL have when you pick a contractor who only offers the lowest price:

1) The first problem is that dirt-cheap contractors don't usually stand behind their work if there is a mistake. Sure, other contractors might do your job for a little less money, but how will they treat you when there is a mistake with your job?

To offer the cheapest price, they usually have low-wage, inexperienced employees that have not been adequately trained. **The end result is that you get what you pay for and the little bit of money you saved ends up costing you more in the long run!** Believe me, this is a little saying we tell our customers: "The good feeling of a cheap price is long gone before the stench of poor quality is ever used up."

2) The second problem with a contractor who offers the lowest price is that they tend to also offer the lowest quality products. Your furnace and/or air conditioner is the biggest appliance in your home and one of the best investments you can make in your home if installed properly.

Plainly said, "Shoddy or low quality contracting because of cheap price costs you money." No amount of savings is worth this. You've worked too hard and spent too much money on your home. Why throw it away for the few pennies you save on a contractor?

3) And the third reason why picking the cheapest contractor is a problem is that you might get charged extra for things other contractors normally include in their quote in the first place. You'll be charged extra for such things as filters, thermostats and overtime due to bad estimates. Cheap contractors nickel and dime you to death. What seemed like a good price actually ends up costing you more in the end. This is just a tactic cheap contractors use to get in the door.

To avoid buying on price alone, we suggest you choose two or three contractors and rank them in the order that is important to you such as **Quality first, Service second, and Price last.**

Mistake #2 All Contractors Are the Same.

No two contractors are really the same. Every contractor has different equipment and employees who know how to do certain kinds of jobs well.

Contracting is art and craftsmanship combined. Most homeowners don't understand that contractors, despite all the technological advances, still use the same quality work habits as twenty years ago.

Contrary to what a lot of people think, heating and cooling is not just banging on the furnace, changing filters or recharging air conditioners. It takes craftsmanship to turn out quality work. Contractors have to diagnose, measure and perform complicated calculations before they can start a job.

Communication is key to picking the best contractor for YOU.

Ask what type of work they do. Ask what their average turnaround time is. Ask if they work weekends. Ask any other questions that are unique to your needs.

This will help you decide whether they are the best contractor for YOU!

After you ask your questions, it will become pretty obvious which company you should choose. The company that wants your business will prove to you they

are the best contractor to do your work. Take your time to decide which contractor you would like to use -- but when you decide, you must be loyal to them (see Mistake #3).

Mistake #3 Always Have 3 or More Contractors Competing for Your Work.

You may think this is a good way to do business. And it is good business before you find the "Right" contractor. But when you find the "Right" contractor that best fits your needs, it is in your best interest to be loyal to that contractor.

Here is why...

A good contractor has enough loyal customers that they don't have to deal with price shoppers. If you flip-flop from contractor-to-contractor, a good shop won't be motivated to keep YOU as a customer.

Price is important. But price should not be more important than good quality and good service.

This is what homeowners typically like to do. They try to get everyone fighting for the same piece of pie. This might work in the short-term to save a few bucks. But, when you have an emergency, none of these companies will bend over backwards to help you. (And if you have been a price shopper in the past, they will probably charge you more!)

Provided that the homeowner is a regular customer, every contractor expects to bend over backwards now and again. He or she might have to work all night or on a weekend for an emergency job.

All good contractors will be loyal to you if YOU are loyal to them. Keep loyalty in mind when you pick your contractor.

Mistake #4 Having the Right Equipment is All a Contractor Needs to Do Your Job!

Many contractors own great equipment, but that doesn't mean they know how to use it. You can have the "latest, greatest technological wonder gizmo", but if you don't know how to use it properly, you are better off not even picking the darn thing up.

Many contractors have tools that have a lot of bells and whistles, but if he's a technician who doesn't know how to use the new features, you might as well go to a company that has old equipment.

Make sure the technician is trained by the factory or another competent company. This ensures your work will get done right the first time and on time!

Mistake #5 You Don't Give Your Contractor Enough Time to Complete Your Job Properly!

Mistakes happen when you rush!

When you're in a hurry, you may forget to give your contractor certain instructions. Or you might make a poor purchase decision because you're in a panic to get a job done. These are costly mistakes!

Schedule. Schedule. Schedule.

Before you start work on a project, talk with your contractor. Get your contractor involved from the beginning because there might be a more efficient way to finish your project on time that you don't know about.

You can save time, money and headaches from the very beginning by communicating with your contractor!

Why then do most people do the opposite and wait until the last minute to talk to the contractor?

The reason is that everyone takes the contractor for granted. Homeowners think that the contractor can easily take care of his or her work. Most everyone thinks the contractor is sitting around waiting for his or her job to come through the door. This isn't the case.

You should think of your contractor as your "project partner". Consult your contractor. Let them know in advance what you want installed or fixed. Ask them if they have any tips to make your job easier.

You are not the only customer your contractor has. When they walk in the door and you're saying you need it now, a contractor can't always help you. YOU need to work together.

Mistake #6 You Pick Contractors Who Don't Guarantee Their Work.

All reputable contractors guarantee their work. This means if they make a mistake on your job, they will re-do or fix your job at no charge.

Unfortunately, there are unethical contractors who do not take any responsibility for their mistakes.

An unethical contractor may hold your work hostage or may say that they will fix your job, but pin the problem on you and tack on an extra charge. There are about a hundred other things a not-so-good contractor may do to you.

The best thing you can do is pick a contractor who unconditionally guarantees their work. If it's not done right and it's their mistake, they will do it again or fix it.

Mistake #7 You Don't Ask for References.

This is probably the easiest way you can avoid any problems with a contractor. ALL good reputable contractors will eagerly give you references. Ask your contractor to give you at least three names of people who they have done business with. And also ask them how long they have worked with this customer.

Also ask them what type of job they did for those references. Try to get the names of customers who had similar things done that you need done.

This is the easiest way you can pick the right contractor for YOU!

Mistake #8 You Don't Demand a Load Calculation

As your family changes, your heating should change as well. Home expansions, like a new office or bedroom, will place additional heating pressures on your furnace. By bringing in an expert contractor to re-assess load calculations, the contractor can make adjustments to the air conditioning and heating system, which ensures that the furnace is providing you with the greatest comfort and lowest energy bills.

Overlooking this step is quite common and many "lazy" heating contractors simply take a previous system's specifications and conduct a furnace installation based on the size of the original heating system, which creates

many problems. It is critical for your bank account and comfort that the furnace is not too big or small.

An oversized furnace, although it might sound appealing, heats the air but not the contents of the room, which sends a false impression to the thermostat to shut off the furnace too quickly. Since only the air is warm, the air cools quickly, which turns the furnace on again. The furnace will then turn on and off very quickly, wasting gas and electricity every time. This action is known as cycling. Rapid cycling wastes ten times more energy than continuous operation.

On the flip side, if the unit is too small, the furnace is not powerful enough to properly heat the house on the coldest Edmonton days so it never shuts off, leading to maintenance issues and fluctuating temperatures.

In determining the proper size of your unit, your contractor will consider many factors including the following:

- The size in square feet of the area to be cooled and heated
- Year round climate
- Humidity
- Size and number of windows
- Degree of insulation
- The direction your home is facing
- Any heat producing appliances and
- How many people will be in the home

A right size system determined by an accurate load calculation goes a long way to providing a comfortable, trouble free environment year round.

Mistake #9 You Ignore Indoor Air Quality

Indoor air quality describes the comfort and health you and your family experience in your Edmonton home. Many of us have a great interest in the quality of food and water we eat and drink (five to seven pounds per day). However, perhaps even more important is the quality of indoor air that we breathe (30 to 40 pounds per day). Indoor air contains up to five times more pollutants than that of outdoor air.

Lung Associations report that the poor quality of indoor air is a major cause of lung cancer and chronic lung diseases like asthma and infections. It is also linked to dry eyes, nausea, fatigue, headaches and nasal congestion.

With the advance of technology in today's world, furnace and air conditioning systems deliver more than heating and cooling. Modern systems with additional complexity and robustness address air quality with built-in air filtration systems and humidifiers. These are just some of the potential improvements to indoor air quality available for your family.

When researching heating and cooling systems make sure you talk to a qualified and reputable contractor. An expert contractor will make you aware of features and options that maximize comfort and safety within your home.

Mistake #10 You Don't Understand the "Lingo"

Since understanding the lingo is important, we decided to define the most common Heating and Air terms so that YOU understand what contractors are saying!

A.F.U.E.: Annual Fuel Utilization Efficiency indicates how much you can reduce your annual heating costs by improving your heating system or by replacing it with a higher efficiency unit.

BTU: (British Thermal Unit) The amount of energy that's needed to change the temperature of one pound of water by one degree Fahrenheit. This is what the heat removed from your home is measured in.

COIL: Looks like a radiator on a car. The coil is usually installed inside the box on top of your furnace. It takes the heat and moisture out of the air as the refrigerant (aka Freon) evaporates.

CONDENSER: This is the unit outside the home that's usually making all the noise (at least in the older models). This holds the compressor, which is the heart of your system. In addition, it also transforms your refrigerant (Freon) from a gas to a liquid. Finally there's a fan discharging heat to the outdoors.

REFRIGERANT: This is the real name for what many people call Freon. It's the fluid that evaporates at low temperatures and pulls heat and humidity out of the air.

S.E.E.R.: Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating. Higher S.E.E.R. ratings mean greater efficiency and lower energy costs. Modern air conditioners and heat pumps in Canada must have a 13.0 S.E.E.R. rating. Furnaces are rated by A.F.U.E.

SPLIT SYSTEM: The most common system in the country. Some components are inside the home and others outside. The inside is the furnace and evaporator coil. Outside is the condensing unit.

TON: The unit used to measure the capacity of an air conditioning system. One ton of air conditioning removes 12,000 BTUs of heat energy per hour from your home.

"The 6 Costly Misconceptions About Heating & Air Conditioning."

Misconception #1 As long as it's running, it's O.K.

Not necessarily. Equipment often appears to be running fine but may be on the brink of failure. Furnaces can have cracked heat exchangers and appear to run properly. However, they are leaking carbon monoxide setting up a very dangerous situation. Air conditioners will run low on refrigerant but have to run harder and longer. This can eventually lead to equipment failure. Just because it seems to be running okay doesn't mean there's not a serious problem.

Misconception #2 Changing filters is all the maintenance you need.

Changing filters is a good start but more should be done. Changing and keeping filters clean is critical to maintaining the proper air flow through your equipment. However, there are numerous things that should be done regularly. The blower should be inspected and lubed. Refrigerant level and thermocouples checked. Burners adjusted and cleaned. You see, it's more than just changing filters.

Misconception #3 It's normal for some rooms to be hotter or cooler than others.

Not true. Each room should maintain proper temperature. With a properly designed air distribution system, you should be comfortable in every room of the house. A properly designed system will have different size ducts and registers serving each room. The ducts and registers should only be identical if the rooms are identical and that is unusual. The ducts should also have adjustable dampers for adjusting the airflow to each area.

Misconception #4 Indoor air quality is not a problem at my house.

Highly unlikely. All houses have indoor air quality problems. They just differ in severity. All houses have some problems with dust. It is usually most noticeable right after you've dusted or when company is coming over. In the springtime, pollen can be a big problem. And if you have pets, there's pet hair and dander that get in your air. There are also fumes from painting, hairspray, cooking, and who knows what else. Plastic in your house is always giving off molecules as it sets up. If you have allergies, all these problems

feel amplified by your sneezing and runny nose. All houses have indoor air pollution, some are just worse than others.

Misconception #5 Service contracts are a waste of money.

No. Regular service is critical to making your equipment last a long time and run efficiently. Regular servicing also can detect small problems before they become more serious. No one wants their system to fail on the hottest or coldest day of the year. Regular servicing helps keep your system in tiptop shape and pays for itself in the long run.

Misconception #6 The Company that offers the lowest price is the company you should hire.

Maybe but probably not. Here are a few points to consider.

Point #1: The price you see offered may not be for the services you want performed. Before you select a company, decide what you want to accomplish. Price is usually an indication of quality. More efficient equipment costs more. Better-trained service people cost more. Reliable service and products cost more. You don't buy the cheapest car, clothes, or foods. Don't let price be the deciding factor when choosing a contractor.

Point #2: The price you see advertised may not be the price you pay. Many homeowners have learned that the low price they saw advertised was not the amount they the company charged them.

And if you've hired a contractor, you too may have been the victim of false or misleading advertising. You probably learned the hard way that some companies offer a cheap price -- and then pressure you into paying a lot more once they get inside your home. Some of them may even break the law by using illegal bait and switch tactics.

As in all businesses and professions, the Heating and Air industry has its share of bad apples. I take no pleasure in telling you this, but some are unethical - and sadly, a few are dishonest. By their misleading advertising and false promises, they cast a dark shadow on our entire industry.

Then you'll find other companies - professionals like us who work hard to earn your trust and respect. As a way of improving our profession, we've dedicated our business to educating the public. The only way you can make an intelligent decision is to have all the facts you need.

"3 Simple Ways to Save Money on Your Next Contracting Job"

Recommendation #1: Make a commitment to yourself to get your equipment serviced. The longer you wait, the sooner it'll wear out. Seriously consider a service contract. Regular service will extend the life of your equipment and help maintain its efficiency.

Recommendation #2: Do something about indoor air pollution. Maintain good quality air in your home. This begins by regularly changing your filter. Next, consider an electronic air cleaner, having your ducts cleaned and sanitized, and installing a heat recovery ventilator. The latter will allow you to bring fresh air into your house without wasting the energy you use to heat and cool your air.

Recommendation #3: Ask questions. The way you learn about a company is to ask specific questions and listen carefully to the answers. Here are the questions I suggest you ask:

1. Are you licensed?
2. Are you certified to recover air conditioning refrigerant?
3. Can you give me five references of recent customers?
4. Do you offer financing or take credit cards?
5. What training have you had in the last year?
6. Are you a member of any trade associations and, if so, which ones?
7. Can you be reached in an emergency?

If you want great service by a well-qualified contractor who can service your equipment completely and thoroughly removing the bacteria, fungus, chemicals, pollens, and tobacco products from your system and indoor air – then we invite you to contact Pro Solutions Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning at **587-409-5683**.

Pro Solutions will be happy to answer your questions provide you a cost estimate over the telephone or come into your home and give you a **free equipment assessment and quotation** -- without obligation of any kind.

Here's one last point: We know that many homeowners are skeptical about contractors. We're skeptical as well. So in addition to dedicating their business to consumer education, Pro Solutions is the only Edmonton company to offer the following five guarantees:

1. **Property Protection Guarantee** Pro Solutions promises to replace or repair any damage they cause such as lawns, shrubbery, carpeting, floors, walls, furniture and door frames are protected. To ensure that no damage occurs in your home, they use protective shoe covers, hall runners, or drop cloths in all work areas.
2. **Comfort Guarantee** Pro Solutions promises that your new system will heat or cool your home as they stated. If your new system does not achieve the promised temperature range, Pro Solutions will replace the system at no charge.
3. **Exceptional "NO LEMONS" Guarantee** Pro Solutions will replace the entire unit (not just repair it) if your compressor in your new air conditioner fails twice in the first 5 years or if your heat exchanger fails in the first 10 years. And if you choose **AMANA**, you get a **LIFETIME REPLACEMENT Guarantee!**
4. **100% Inspection Guarantee** Pro Solutions promises that your installation meets all Edmonton health and safety codes.
5. **Investment Guarantee** Pro Solutions is so confident in their specialized team and branded equipment that they guarantee your investment. If you find a lower price on the same equipment, installation, and guarantees we'll pay you \$50.00. All they ask is that you ensure that the comparison is "apples to apples".

Edmonton's Pro Solutions Plumbing, Heating & Air Conditioning guarantees every job they do. If you aren't happy with their work, they'll work to make it right.

As a matter of fact, add this question to the list of things to ask a contractor you're considering hiring, "Do you guarantee your work?" Not all companies do and it's important that you have this information before you make your decision.

EXPERIENCE PRO SOLUTIONS' GUARANTEED SERVICE RISK-FREE!

The most discriminating homeowners in Edmonton rely on Pro Solutions Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning to keep their homes safe and comfortable.

Pro Solutions provides a **FREE EQUIPMENT ASSESSMENT**, which is much more than just an estimate. Pro Solutions gives you a complete equipment assessment and tells you exactly what to expect from their services. **NO SURPRISES!**

So call their office right now at **587-409-5683**, 24-hours a day, 7 days a week. I look forward to adding you to their list of satisfied clients.

Warmest Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bob Bies".

Bob Bies

www.Furnace-Repair-Edmonton.ca

587-409-5683

PS: Find out what people are saying about Pro Solutions Plumbing, Heating and Air Conditioning! Read the next few pages!!

Testimonials

Hired Pro Solutions to come in and do all the heating and plumbing for a new home. Price-wise they were higher than some but the professionalism and quality of work is exceptional (sometimes you get what you pay for). Kept a schedule and worked around the difficulties that were inherent with the project. Found solutions to issues and pointed out things to consider moving forward. The entire team was helpful, knowledgeable and understanding. Other trades and inspectors have commented on the clean work they have done.

- Gerald Devost, Edmonton

Pro Solutions absolutely came through for us when our boiler system caught fire. Always came on time, installed new boiler system as promised with not 1 extra cost, not to mention price was very comparable with other quotes. Install looks great and works great! All employees were very friendly, the company stands behind their guarantee.

- Jen South, Edmonton

Right from the dispatcher to the technician, I was completely satisfied with the job. They were on time and the technician was careful and courteous. The dispatcher was friendly and helpful even though I had to juggle the scheduling around a bit. I would highly recommend this company.

- Bert Lewis Estates, Edmonton

I called Pro Solutions on Saturday as my hot water tank stop working. They sent Prince out but was not able to fix it that day came out on the Monday to install hot water tank. He was awesome, very courteous, respectful and his work was great. He offered to remove my humidifier as it was not working, because of this there was a problem with the furnace and Prince had this problem rectified. I was very happy with the service I received. Awesome.

- Theresa Labossiere, Edmonton

We had an excellent experience with Pro Solutions. Our hot water tank was leaking water everywhere. Rob returned my phone call within minutes and Prince was at our house within a couple of hours. We had to replace our hot water tank and Prince was amazing. He told us about the different options out there and helped us choose one that would be best for our family. He was very friendly and professional and did a great job. His work was very neat and well done and I think he left our house even cleaner than it was when he got here!

I would definitely recommend Pro Solutions and Prince to anyone! Thank you so much!!

- Andrea Mielke, Edmonton

Keith N. is one of those rare people who REALLY LOVES THEIR JOB! It was marvelous to see! He installed a gas connection for our BBQ. He was quick, helpful, neat, efficient and very professional. Thanks Keith!

- Lisa Jane Kellerman, Edmonton

Brad L. came over and addressed our problems in a clear and concise manner. He was very polite and respectful of us and our property and extremely professional and clear about what he proposed to do before he did it. Prices were fair. We intend to use Pro Solutions again and I just wish we'd found them sooner!

- Tim Hamaguchi, Edmonton

I had a leak in my bathroom. Pro Solutions was able to schedule a tech to come out with only 36 hours notice. Keith N. arrived right on time, and was able to fix the problem in about an hour. Not only is he quick but the work was done perfectly, my bathroom was spotless and he was a genuinely good guy. I am super impressed with Pro Solutions and have already recommended them to two friends.

- James Tinney, Edmonton

I recently had an air conditioning unit purchased and installed by Pro Solutions. There was some water leaking from the unit. I saw Brad by the Pro Solutions Van and asked if he could check it out. He came and assessed the situation. The next available time for me, Brad came and repaired the problem quickly and efficiently. What impressed me the most was Brad took the time to explain everything to me. He is super friendly, great teacher and a fantastic worker to have in your home. He left the site clean. Pro Solutions is a great friendly company.

- Rachelle Gagnon, Edmonton

It was a realllllly long wait between the time Prince came and looked at it and the time he started work. 3 hours. After that, no issues. Well worth the wait. His attention to detail and professionalism was beyond question. True to their word, what they quote is what you pay. I would definitely recommend them. Jackie from dispatch was super excellent in dealing with my queries. Super patient and highly knowledgeable.

- Sidney Chan, Edmonton

Prince is the best! Friendly, honest and just a great guy Did what needed to done. He even cleaned up the sink after they were done!! Sparkling!!! I would request him again and again. He is a PRINCE! Great company PRO Solutions. I highly recommend them.

- Joanne Branigan, Edmonton

We had our furnace stop working and within 20 minutes of calling Pro Solutions they had a service tech at my door. They were fantastic! The problem was solved, with no sales pitch or attempt to "up sell" me on a new furnace. The tech was extremely informative, showed me the part that failed and what it did. He was even able to provide me a brief history on my 30 year old furnace and the common problems! I would most definitely call Pro Solutions for any plumbing, heating or cooling services!

- Craig S, Edmonton

Prince and Khris were very courteous and efficient. Got along very well with my Yorkies. They answered all of our questions clearly and fully. I would recommend them to anyone.

- Louise Crawford, Edmonton